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## **K**OREA: PROBLEM PROTECTORATE

by

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## KOREA: PROBLEM PROTECTORATE

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**O**N A DAY not yet specified in April or May, Syngman Rhee, who will then be 85 years old, will go before the voters of the Republic of Korea to ask and almost certainly gain election as President for a fourth four-year term.<sup>1</sup> Rhee, at the helm of his country since it won the independence for which he had fought since his youth, has given it strong leadership through trying times. However, his renewed candidacy has been a source of some misgiving abroad. Age is not the only consideration. The lack of respect for democratic processes that has been evidenced not infrequently during Rhee's tenure has disturbed Western observers. Whether attributable to the difficulties under which the country labored or to its political immaturity, these lapses contributed to a feeling that search should be made for fresh leadership capable of strengthening the R.O.K. as a free nation.

Only massive military assistance from the West enabled South Korea to withstand and survive the Communist attack that hit the republic when it was barely two years old. When hostilities finally ceased, they were succeeded by an uneasy armistice that did not obviate the need to maintain large military forces. Division of Korea into two economically unbalanced parts already had complicated the task of making the R.O.K. self-supporting, and partition had set up political strains that presumably will persist to the remote day when reunification can be realized.

Efforts to improve the country's economic position have not been helped by the animosity shown by Koreans toward the Japanese, who were their masters during most of the first half of this century. Syngman Rhee's marked sensitivity on this score has made for bitter relations with the nation that now is the free world's strongest representative in the Far East. It is on the United States that the R.O.K. relies for the extensive economic assistance and

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<sup>1</sup> Rhee, elected for his first term by the National Assembly when the republic was founded in 1948, was re-elected by popular vote in 1952 and 1956.

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military aid that are essential to its continued existence in freedom.

#### KOREA: FROM CONQUEST BY JAPAN TO PARTITION

After a period of centuries in which Korea, though having its own monarch, acknowledged the suzerainty of China, the country became in modern times a pawn in Far Eastern power struggles involving China, Japan and Russia. Japan had the upper hand following its victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. Within a decade it was able to make Korea a virtual Japanese protectorate, and in 1910 it annexed the country outright.<sup>2</sup> Although Korea was nominally independent between 1895 and 1905, its government was backward, inefficient and corrupt, and an authoritarian political tradition prevailed.

An active Korean revolutionary movement took form after Japan's disbandment of the Korean army in 1906. Toward the end of World War I, Korean nationalists gained inspiration from President Wilson's Fourteen Points and the plans for a League of Nations. Leaders of the underground independence movement joined with exiled groups in 1919 to organize the "Provisional Korean Republic," which had Syngman Rhee as its first president. Between that time and Japan's surrender at the end of World War II, 26 years later, the Korean provisional government functioned continuously outside Korea, first in Shanghai and later, from 1938 to 1945, in Chungking.

Three years of military occupation followed surrender of Japanese troops in Korea—to the United States military command south of the 38th parallel and to the Soviet command north of that line. During the occupation period the United States and subsequently the United Nations made every effort to obtain Soviet agreement to establishment of a unified Korean state, as pledged at Potsdam.<sup>3</sup> A U.N. commission, barred from North Korea, finally held elections in South Korea for a National Assembly on May 10, 1948, and on Aug. 23, 1948, a democratic constitution was promulgated for the Republic of Korea. Soviet authorities in North Korea set up the Democratic People's Republic of Korea the next month. Partition thus became fixed.

<sup>2</sup> See "Freedom for Korea," *E.R.R.*, 1945 Vol. II, pp. 300-304.

<sup>3</sup> "The division of Korea . . . had been intended purely for the purpose of accepting the surrender of Japanese troops in Korea."—Walter S. Robertson, U.S. Representative to United Nations General Assembly, before Political and Security Committee, Nov. 23, 1949.

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Lack of a tradition of self-government, widespread poverty among the people, and the ever-present military threat from North Korea have tended to withhold from South Koreans so far the broad political freedom to be expected in a modern democracy. Within the past five years the Liberal Party, led by President Rhee, and the Democratic Party have emerged as the two major political organizations. Both are conservative in general philosophy, anti-Communist, and strongly nationalist. No strong opposition group holding sharply different political views exists. Shannon McCune, an American student of Korean affairs, pointed out several years ago that, as a result, "Many of the disputes between the two parties are those of the out's against the in's." He concluded that "No great transformation of political life in Korea will be likely to occur even if there is a change in the party in power."<sup>4</sup>

The Conlon Associates, a research group in which University of California professors are prominent, drew the following conclusions in a recent study for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

Should Rhee pass from the scene, conservative party ranks would almost certainly undergo a process of regrouping, with elements of both major parties forming new units. The indications are strong, however, that some conservative coalition will hold the reins of political power in Korea, at least for the immediate future, irrespective of Rhee's tenure in office. The left wing . . . is still relatively weak. This is due to many factors: the continuing force of Korean conservatism, the impact of the Korean war upon the left wing, and the control policies of the government among other things.<sup>5</sup>

The small left-wing Progressive Party was outlawed in February 1958. The man who was its presidential candidate in 1952 and 1956 was hanged as a Communist agent last July.

#### TICKETS IN THE SPRING PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST

Syngman Rhee, still Korea's national hero, was nominated at a Liberal Party convention last June 29 for still another term as President, and Lee Ki Poong, speaker of the National Assembly, was nominated for Vice President. Lee, at 63, is chairman of the Liberal Party central committee

<sup>4</sup> Shannon McCune, "The United States and Korea," *The United States and the Far East* (American Assembly, December 1956), p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> Conlon Associates, Ltd., *Study of U.S. Foreign Policy for Asia* (Nov. 1, 1959), pp. 114-115.

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and second only to Rhee in terms of political power. Rhee's advanced age makes the vice presidential contest especially significant. Lee was the Liberal Party's vice presidential nominee in the May 1956 election, but he was defeated then by John M. Chang, the vice presidential nominee of the Democratic Party.

Rhee originally attained the R.O.K. presidency, in July 1948, by vote of the National Assembly under a provision of the Korean constitution calling for indirect election of the President and Vice President. Rhee engineered amendment of the constitution, July 7, 1952, to provide for direct election of the two top executives. He was elected by popular vote for the first time on Aug. 5, 1952, and again on May 15, 1956.

The opposition Democratic Party picked Cho Pyong Ok as its 1960 presidential nominee at its convention last Nov. 26. Vice President Chang, who narrowly lost his party's presidential nomination, was renominated for his present post. Although Cho is given little chance to win over Rhee, Chang defeated Lee Ki Poong for Vice President four years ago and may do so again. Vice President Chang, who was educated in the United States, is a devout Catholic and militantly anti-Communist. Before running as opposition vice presidential candidate in 1956, he had been a Rhee follower and had filled various high government positions. Rhee sent Chang as the first R.O.K. ambassador to the United States in 1949 and made him prime minister in 1950. Disagreements arose between the two men, however, and Chang resigned in April 1952. The office of prime minister was abolished two years later under an amendment to the constitution sponsored by Rhee and adopted by the National Assembly.

#### **POLITICAL CONTROVERSY OVER VICE PRESIDENCY**

President Rhee has dominated the R.O.K. since its establishment and has exercised personal control in many quarters of the government. Criticism within and without Korea has been directed at the tendency of Rhee and his Liberal Party to use police powers and strong-arm tactics against their opponents. The government has even been accused of instigating attempts to assassinate key figures. During the past year and a half in particular, representative government has suffered setbacks and basic civil liberties have been infringed.

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A major disturbance in Korea's turbulent political life stemmed from the anomaly of the election of Rhee, a Liberal, as President, and of Chang, a Democrat, as Vice President in 1956. Since that happened, the Liberals have tended to circumvent or ignore the Vice President, and various measures have been employed to curtail his influence and powers. An article in the Korean constitution provides for accession of the Vice President if the President dies or becomes incapacitated. Rhee's Liberal followers were preparing to amend that article to prevent a Vice President of one party from automatically succeeding a President of another party, but in the elections for the National Assembly on May 2, 1958, they failed to win enough seats to muster the two-thirds majority needed to put through a constitutional amendment. Speaker Lee Ki Poong said on May 11, 1958, that "We have given up the idea of pushing a constitutional change through the legislature."

Since an attempt on Sept. 28, 1956, to assassinate Vice President Chang, he has lived in semi-seclusion under constant police surveillance. Chang complained not long ago that he had never been allowed to perform any official duties. "No papers ever come to my office. I am excluded from everything."<sup>6</sup> Several government organs have not functioned because Chang would be entitled, *ex officio*, to preside over them: the upper house of the legislature, a constitutional committee, and the court of impeachment. When the constitution was amended on July 7, 1952, to provide for popular election of President and Vice President, another amendment was approved to replace the unicameral National Assembly with a bicameral legislature, each house to be elected by popular vote. However, the second amendment has not yet been put into effect as Rhee's Liberal Party has blocked holding of elections for the 76-member House of Councillors, the Assembly's upper house.

#### MEASURES EXPANDING POWER OF PRESIDENT RHEE

The Rhee-dominated Assembly in December 1958 passed a number of bills obviously designed to consolidate the position of the Liberal Party in the face of growing popular support of opposition Democrats. Under one of these laws elections for the House of Councillors, which had

<sup>6</sup> Igor Oganessoff, "Korea's Democracy," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 15, 1959.

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been slated for Jan. 25, 1959, were postponed to a date to be fixed by Rhee. The most controversial of the new measures, an amendment to the national security law, increased the power of the government to move against subversive elements and against Communist infiltration from North Korea. The new law broadened the government's investigatory authority, tightened restrictions on the press, and in effect enabled the Rhee regime to arrest political opponents under vague charges that they were helping Communists. The measure was passed by unanimous vote of the Liberal majority but only after police had forcibly ejected members of the Democratic opposition from the Assembly chamber.

At the same session the Assembly revised the local autonomy act to the disadvantage of the Democrats. Steady Democratic gains had been especially marked in the cities; the opposition party had won a series of decisive victories in Seoul. The amended law provided that mayors and township heads would thereafter be appointed by the government, instead of elected by the people.

The Conlon report summed up as follows the darker side of the democratic experience in South Korea:

Throughout its brief history, the Republic of Korea has been marred by political violence, acts of flagrant suppression, and certain police-state tactics. And today, as the election of 1960 approaches, the Liberal administration is engaged in successive acts that can only be regarded as assaults upon basic democratic rights. The Democratic Party is being intimidated, its leaders threatened, its press restricted, and its general rights violated. The charge of "treason" is being used loosely to justify these actions, and laws such as the national security law are being rammed through the National Assembly over bitter opposition to give them legal sanction. At the same time, the local autonomy act was amended, . . . thereby greatly augmenting the power of the central government in what is obviously an attempt to make it impregnable at election time.

The report suggested that "Perhaps Korea does not have a two-party system, but rather a 1½-party system, with the opposition . . . intimidated and discouraged."<sup>7</sup>

On departing from Korea on Dec. 5, 1952, at the conclusion of a secret three-day visit made in fulfillment of a campaign promise, President-elect Eisenhower told President Rhee that history was "certain to assign to you a

<sup>7</sup> Conlon Associates, *op. cit.*, p. 118.



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large portion of the credit . . . for welding your countrymen together in their march toward the great goal of freedom." Although the goal has yet to be fully attained, Rhee, with the aid of the United States, has kept South Korea from falling under Communist bondage. If President Eisenhower decides to stop again at Seoul on his return journey from Moscow via Tokyo in June, the second visit—coming on the heels of the trip to the Soviet Union—will give emphatic reminder of this country's continued support of the principles which Americans fought to defend in Korea.

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### **South Korea's Economic Handicaps**

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OBSERVERS agree that without American aid the South Korean economy could not have survived. Severe handicaps have impeded Korean economic expansion: the economic imbalance resulting from Korea's former status as virtually a colony of Japan; partition of the country after World War II; and the drain and devastation of the Korean War. During the 40 years of Japan's rule, management of production in Korea was in the hands of Japanese. Although they contributed substantially to the country's economic growth, the development was directed to satisfaction of Japan's needs. In addition, Koreans were effectively excluded from economic leadership and barred from administrative posts of any importance. After World War II, Japanese businessmen and administrators were forced to leave Korea, and management of the economy fell to untrained Koreans.

The problem of Korean economic imbalance was made immeasurably more serious by the country's artificial division at the 38th parallel. Thus emerged the basic Korean paradox, for the two halves of the country—industrial north and agricultural south—had complemented each other economically. The Communist north, with hardly more than one-fourth of Korea's 30 million people, contains the bulk of Korean resources of waterpower and of coal and other minerals. South Korea, with nearly three times the population, has only meager natural resources, especially resources of the type required for heavy industry. Without industrialization, the R.O.K.'s chances of achieving

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sufficient economic growth to do without foreign aid probably are poor. U.S. aid for relief and economic development totaled about \$400 million in the five-year period between the end of World War II and outbreak of the Korean War.

#### DEPENDENCE ON U.S. MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID

South Korea's need of economic assistance was vastly increased by the Communist invasion in 1950 and the ensuing three-year war. Destruction of productive goods and facilities was estimated at more than \$3 billion. Maintenance even today of a 700,000-man standing army, the world's fourth largest, generates inflationary pressures, as does the presence in Korea of two American army divisions. The continuing high level of military expenditure necessarily limits investment in development projects and hampers economic progress. Economic aid programs immediately after the Korean War concentrated on relief and consumer requirements in order to meet the pressing need for subsistence goods, to control inflation, and to make currency available to keep the R.O.K. government solvent.

Most observers believe that South Korea will be heavily dependent on American aid for years to come. Contributions to support of the country have put a considerable load on the U.S. Treasury. Total U.S. economic and military aid to South Korea since 1950 has been estimated at around \$3 billion. Economic aid amounted to more than \$300 million in fiscal 1956 and again in fiscal 1957, but the sum was cut to \$221 million in fiscal 1958 and to \$216 million in fiscal 1959. The latter amount, added to an estimated \$175 million in military assistance,<sup>\*</sup> made an aid total greater than that for any other country last year.

Thanks to the flow of American aid for postwar rehabilitation, the South Korean economy was saved from collapse and now has finally entered a phase of relatively rapid development. The aid-financed production system has reached the stage of light industries producing primarily consumer goods. Some sectors of the economy have shown spectacular improvement in recent years; industrial and mining production have registered substantial gains. The R.O.K. industrial production index reached a record high of 194 last June (1955=100).

<sup>\*</sup> Military aid totals are not available by countries. Above estimate for Korea cited by Edward Neilan, "Rhee Runs Again," *The Reporter*, Nov. 26, 1959, p. 29.

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### POPULATION PRESSURES, PRICE INFLATION, GRAFT

Living standards are rising faster in urban than in rural areas, as progress in agriculture has been slow. About three-fourths of the South Koreans are farmers or fishermen, and their annual cash income averages no more than \$50 apiece. With 22 million people multiplying at a rate of 1.6 per cent annually, pressure of population on the land is severe. In proportion to cultivated acreage, the republic's rural population density is among the highest in the world. The labor force of nine million persons has been swollen by refugees from the north, and problems of underemployment and unemployment are grave. Even though Korea maintains a large standing army, more than a million workers are unemployed or substantially underemployed. North Korea, by contrast, asserts that every able-bodied man and woman there is fully employed.

Inflation remains a constant threat in South Korea, but the situation in that respect has shown substantial improvement. After a decade of serious inflation, the R.O.K. government in early 1957 undertook an austerity program with the support of the U.S. aid mission to the Combined Economic Board.<sup>9</sup> Prices, which had been rising rapidly, were virtually stabilized in 1958. Although wholesale prices rose by 16 per cent in 1957, they fell by 6 per cent in 1958.<sup>10</sup> Import totals in 1959 were three times larger than exports, but in 1955 they had been four times larger. Much larger tax revenues eliminated the budget deficit.

The close relationship between government and business that prevails in Korea results in extensive graft. A high proportion of American aid goods reportedly passes into unauthorized hands or simply disappears. Military and civilian government salaries were doubled in October 1958, in part to reduce the temptation to indulge in graft, and the R.O.K. army has decreed severe punishment for theft of military supplies. These measures seem to have had some effect, for Ernest K. Lindley reported from Korea in *Newsweek*, Aug. 3, 1959, that "Good progress appears to have been made in curbing corruption and misuse of American goods."

<sup>9</sup> A bipartite body set up under a U.S.-Korean Economic Coordination Agreement of 1952. It was established in response to a U.N. Security Council request that the unified command, i.e., the United States, take responsibility for relief and support of the Korean civilian population.

<sup>10</sup> Figures from compilations by the R.O.K. Ministry of Reconstruction and the Bank of Korea.

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## Unresolved Issue of Korean Unification

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FREE WORLD COOPERATION in resistance to Communist aggression in 1950 succeeded only in preserving the integrity of the Republic of Korea as recently established. It accomplished nothing toward reunifying divided Korea. When American troops penetrated deep into North Korea late in 1950, Peking sent in thousands of "volunteers" to stop and reverse their course. There is no sign that Red China is any more prepared now than it was then to permit setting up of an outpost of freedom across its Yalu River border at the top of the Korean peninsula. North Korea stretches up toward Vladivostok and Soviet Russia's territory in the Far East, and it is Soviet influence that has been dominant in North Korea from the beginning. But the prospect of a change of policy on Korean unification in Moscow seems as remote as a change in Peking.

### NORTH-SOUTH STALEMATE SINCE 1953 ARMISTICE

The Korean armistice was signed July 27, 1953, by the U.N. command, North Korea, and Communist China. R.O.K. President Rhee never has accepted the armistice, but his government has abided by its provisions. The United States assumed ultimate responsibility for defending South Korea against the continuing external threat.

A U.S.-R.O.K. defense treaty, signed in October 1953, authorized stationing of American forces in South Korea and committed the United States to "act to meet the common danger" in event of an armed attack on that country. The treaty specified also that the R.O.K. was to take no unilateral military action without consulting the United States. Although Rhee's Liberal Party has threatened an attack on North Korea to bring about reunification by force, the R.O.K. is not apt to defy U.S. and world opinion to that extent.

As in partitioned Germany, the Communist side in Korea has refused to agree to peaceful reunification through free elections. The Communists know they would be defeated at the polls and be relegated to a minority status in a unified nation. The eight million people of North Korea are overwhelmingly outnumbered by South Korea's population of 22 million. The Korean War made the South Koreans

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confirmed anti-Communists, and North Koreans are not believed to be unanimously pro-Communist.

A conference held at Geneva, April 26 to June 15, 1954, in delayed conformity with the Korean armistice agreement,<sup>11</sup> tried in vain to settle the question of Korean unification. The U.S.S.R., across the table from countries whose troops had fought in Korea, demanded the equivalent of a veto power for North Korea in an all-Korean election commission and denied the right of the United Nations to play any part in the proceedings. The 16 U.N. command nations at the conference said in their final declaration, June 15, 1954:

The Communist delegations have rejected our every effort to obtain agreement. . . . We desire genuinely free elections. The Communists insist upon procedures which would make genuinely free elections impossible. It is clear that the Communists will not accept impartial and effective supervision of free elections. Plainly, they have shown their intention to maintain Communist control over North Korea. They have persisted in the same attitudes which have frustrated United Nations efforts to unify Korea since 1947.

Following the failure at Geneva, U.N. and Communist forces stayed on at their posts on either side of a narrow demilitarized zone established by the armistice.

#### RED CHINA'S PROPOSALS FOR TROOP WITHDRAWAL

The State Department disclosed on Feb. 10, 1958, that Peking had renewed a proposal for simultaneous withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea. On the same day Communist Chinese Premier Chou En-lai told the National People's Congress in Peking that withdrawal of foreign troops was "a prerequisite for the holding of free elections throughout Korea and the peaceful unification of Korea," and that his government was "prepared to take the initiative in order to promote" realization of the proposal for troop withdrawal.

The initiative took the form of a decision, announced in a joint Chinese Communist-North Korean communique on Feb. 19, that Red Chinese forces would all be pulled out of North Korea by the end of the year 1958, whether or not U.N. troops were evacuated from South Korea. The United States itself announced on Feb. 19 that this country was not planning to reduce its armed forces in the R.O.K.

<sup>11</sup> The armistice agreement had recommended holding the conference within 90 days.

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Chinese troop withdrawals nevertheless proceeded and completion of the movement was reported on Oct. 25, 1958.<sup>12</sup>

As for Korean reunification, a lengthy exchange of notes between Peking and the 16 members of the U.N. command produced no positive result. The allies asked Red China for details on the kind of elections contemplated. Peking responded in May 1958 by stating that U.S. troops would have to be withdrawn before elections could be discussed. A note of Dec. 16, 1958, from the 16 nations said the troops would be withdrawn only when Korea had been reunified by free elections. Peking replied, March 4, 1959, by reiterating its demand for troop withdrawal. There the exchange ended. Walter S. Robertson, U.S. Representative to the U.N. General Assembly, observed before the Assembly's Political Committee last Nov. 23 that the record made it clear that the Communists had "no present desire to move forward to the settlement of the Korean problem on any terms short of surrender by the United Nations." The General Assembly on Dec. 9 adopted a resolution again calling on the "Communist authorities concerned" to agree to holding of genuinely free elections for reunification.<sup>13</sup>

Western observers in general thought at that time that the chief reason behind Communist proposals for withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea was uneasiness over the flow of American arms, especially nuclear weapons, into South Korea. The London *Economist* commented, May 31, 1958:

If the Chinese were to stand by what they have said, they would have reconciled themselves to the prospect of an election in which their chances of winning would be virtually nil. . . . This is a surprising risk for the Chinese Communists to consider, but there is no mystery about their motives. In order to keep the shadow of American nuclear weapons away from their Manchurian doorstep, they may be willing to relax their control over North Korea—hoping that in the long run the whole country will either turn Communist or, failing that, simply be a harmless small neighbour.<sup>14</sup>

Persistence of the deadlock, with no word on the subject

<sup>12</sup> North Korea has armed forces of its own that are "large and heavily armed."—Walter S. Robertson before U.N. General Assembly Political Committee, Nov. 23, 1959.

<sup>13</sup> The Communists had proposed supervision of elections only by an undefined "neutral nations organization."

<sup>14</sup> "A Finland in Asia?" *The Economist*, May 31, 1958, p. 770. The U.N. command had announced, Jan. 29, 1958, that its forces in South Korea had been equipped with atomic artillery. At a meeting of the Korean armistice commission at Panmunjom three days later, the Communist delegate demanded removal of the nuclear weapons, but the demand was summarily rejected by the U.N. command. It was reported unofficially in Washington, Jan. 13, 1960, that Nike Hercules anti-aircraft missiles with nuclear warheads were to be added to the arsenal in South Korea later this year.

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from Red China in nearly a year, would seem to indicate, however, that the Communists are far from ready to abdicate in North Korea.

At the time the question of troop withdrawal was broached by the Communists two years ago, Moscow proposed denuclearization of North and South Korea.<sup>15</sup> Adlai E. Stevenson gave support recently to a proposal, attributed to Soviet Premier Khrushchev, of a more extensive denuclearized zone in that part of the world. Discussing the possible shape of a broad settlement of matters at issue in the Far East, Stevenson suggested: "On the Communist side, the concessions would include . . . free elections under United Nations supervision in Korea. . . . On our side, concessions would presumably include . . . the inclusion of Korea and Japan in the atom-free zone and area of controlled disarmament."<sup>16</sup>

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### **Conflicts of South Korea With Japan**

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RELATIONS between the Republic of Korea and Japan have been put to severe strain during the past year. A bitter dispute between Tokyo and Seoul was touched off on Jan. 29, 1959, when Japanese Foreign Minister Aichihiro Fujiyama told the House of Councillors that the government was planning to facilitate the migration to North Korea of thousands of Korean residents of Japan. Many of the more than 600,000 Koreans in Japan were brought to the country originally as conscript laborers and now are regarded as undesirable aliens.

The plan to assist repatriation of those desiring to go to North Korea was formally approved by the Japanese cabinet last Feb. 13, and a tentative repatriation scheme was worked out early in March by the government ministries concerned. Repatriates were to include only those choosing to go of their own free will; family members of Japanese nationality were to be allowed to accompany them; and each repatriate was to be permitted to take out of Japan a sum of no more than \$125.

<sup>15</sup> See "Military Disengagement," *E.R.R.*, 1958 Vol. I, p. 145.

<sup>16</sup> Adlai E. Stevenson, "Putting First Things First," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1960, p. 202.

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Tokyo security authorities estimated that about 43,000 Koreans would take advantage of the offer. A pro-Communist Korean residents' organization called Chosoren asserted, however, that it had received 117,000 written requests for repatriation to North Korea. Japanese authorities said that many Koreans had been put under pressure by Chosoren to sign up for repatriation. To guard against coercion, Tokyo proposed that the International Committee of the Red Cross, a Swiss body, be asked to assume responsibility for individual screening of prospective repatriates.

The R.O.K. government had reacted violently to the repatriation proposal. The minister heading its diplomatic mission in Japan declared on Feb. 10 that the plan constituted "an act almost as cruel as Russia's crushing of the Hungarian rebellion." Seoul's objections were influenced by considerations of political prestige. The R.O.K. government regards itself as the only legitimate Korean government. It took the view from the outset that any plan to repatriate Koreans from Japan to North Korea would violate Korean sovereignty. Negotiations with North Korea about repatriation would mean, in Seoul's eyes, granting a degree of recognition to the Communist regime. The mere possibility that any Koreans in Japan might elect to go to North Korea was disturbing to President Rhee.

The South Korean cabinet went so far on Feb. 13 as to order interception of ships carrying repatriates and to authorize R.O.K. naval vessels to "fire if fired upon." Four months later the government announced that it had decided on "measures toward Japan, including the possible use of force," if the contemplated repatriation plan was carried out. Finally, on June 15, it went to the extreme of suspending all trade between the R.O.K. and Japan.<sup>17</sup>

North Korea desired repatriation of Koreans from Japan for the same reasons that impelled South Korea to object to the plan. The North Korean government at first rejected the proposal for third-party screening of prospective repatriates. Japanese and North Korean Red Cross representatives nevertheless met in Geneva in mid-April and drafted an agreement on repatriation procedures. Signature of the agreement, which had been completed on June 24, was delayed by insistence of the Japanese government

<sup>17</sup> A previous trade ban, lasting from August 1955 to January 1956, was imposed by Seoul on the ground that Japan was negotiating for trade with North Korea.



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that the International Committee of the Red Cross oversee the repatriation operation. The draft agreement was finally signed in Calcutta on Aug. 13, two days after the International Committee had announced its decision to help the Japanese Red Cross administer the plan.

During a two-week period in December, almost 3,000 Koreans left the Japanese port of Niigata in Soviet ships for North Korea. Nearly 2,000 more have set sail so far in January. The departing Koreans had been interviewed individually by Swiss representatives of the International Red Cross before embarking. Only 5,300 registered for repatriation initially, but after an interval a new batch of 5,000 put in their names at one or another of several thousand offices designated for the purpose all over Japan. These totals are small in relation to the whole number of Koreans in Japan, but the end may not be in sight. The pro-Communist Chosoren organization that is guiding the movement seems to be able to turn it on or off at will.

#### TRADE TROUBLES AND QUARRELING OVER FISHERIES

The evident inability of Japan and South Korea to cooperate for their mutual benefit constitutes a serious problem for the United States. Almost 15 years after the end of World War II and more than six years after the truce in the Korean War, the R.O.K. economy is still dependent on U.S. aid. A major factor in this dependence is the R.O.K.'s diplomatic and commercial isolation. As pointed out by the Conlon Associates: "It is strongly in the interests of the United States that the Republic of Korea have increased diplomatic, cultural and economic relations with the non-Communist world. It is especially important that relations between Korea and Japan be improved."<sup>18</sup>

Although Japan has been one of South Korea's principal trading partners since World War II, the trade between the two countries has never reached the volume maintained in the period when Korea was a part of Japan. Japan forced colonial Korea to buy more of its manufactures and sell it more rice than independent Korea has been willing to do. Before trade relations were suspended last June, R.O.K. imports from Japan, financed mostly by U.S. aid funds, amounted annually to only about \$45 million and exports to Japan to only about \$10 million. The two coun-

<sup>18</sup> Conlon Associates, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

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tries are only six hours apart by ferry, and there is clearly no fundamental obstacle to development of a considerable volume of trade between them to their mutual advantage.

In general, Koreans have bitter memories of their 40 years (1905-1945) of subjugation to Japanese rule, and President Rhee is implacably hostile to Japan. Prospects therefore appear poor for early establishment of good relations. In addition to questions relating to the status and treatment of Korean residents in Japan, there are acute differences over fishing grounds, exchange of prisoners and other detained persons, disposition of property on both sides, and return of Korean art treasures held in Japan.

The fisheries dispute has long been a source of bad feeling. When the United States was in military occupation of both countries after World War II, Japanese fishing boats were forbidden to operate beyond a line drawn in the Sea of Japan between Japan and Korea. The United Nations command, set up at the beginning of the Korean War, continued to enforce observance of this fisheries boundary, and it was subsequently proclaimed unilaterally by the R.O.K. as the "Rhee Line." In some places the line is as far as 60 miles from the Korean coast. Japan's fishing fleets have thereby been excluded from some of the choicest fishing grounds in the Sea of Japan. Fishing boats crossing the line have been fired upon and seized, and more than a thousand trespassing Japanese fishermen have been put under detention in Korean prisons. At the same time, an approximately equal number of Koreans have been held in internment camps in Japan, charged with illegal entry.

Some of the prisoners were exchanged under an R.O.K.-Japanese agreement signed Dec. 3, 1957. That agreement provided for (1) release of Japanese prisoners held in South Korea who had served the terms imposed on them for fishing within South Korean "territorial waters"; and (2) deportation of Korean nationals held in Japanese detention camps for having entered Japan illegally after 1945. Exchanges of new Korean and Japanese detainees were discussed later in connection with negotiations undertaken to settle remaining issues outstanding between the two countries and clear the way for establishment of full diplomatic relations.

Both sides have made large property claims that have not yet been adjusted. The Japanese claim compensation for

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property in Korea that was taken over after World War II by the U.S. occupation and later vested in the R.O.K. The Koreans contend that this property was due them as a form of reparations, and that they are entitled also to investments in Japan of companies which operated in Korea.

#### FAILURE TO AGREE ON FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Establishment of normal relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea has been stalled by the repeated failure of attempts to settle issues in dispute between the two countries. The first talks to arrange for conversion of the existing Korean diplomatic mission to embassy status, begun in 1951, were terminated by Seoul in 1953 when a Japanese delegate remarked that Korea had benefited from Japanese occupation. After Japan had formally retracted that statement, the parleys were resumed in April 1958. Then when Tokyo's repatriation proposal was advanced in January 1959, the R.O.K. once more broke off the conversations.

In a major South Korean concession, believed to have resulted from U.S. diplomatic mediation, Seoul last July 30 proposed resumption of the negotiations. Upon reopening of the parleys, Aug. 12, the R.O.K. chief delegate stated that their successful conclusion would depend largely upon Japan's acceptance of the government at Seoul as "the only lawful government in Korea." Seoul seemed to regard the question of jurisdiction over Korean residents in Japan as the most urgent item on the agenda, and it indicated an intention to try to delay the planned repatriation to North Korea.

The Rhee regime has long refused to agree to unconditional re-entry into South Korea, under a formal repatriation plan, of Koreans now resident in Japan. The R.O.K. foreign minister said last Sept. 8 that his government was prepared to take back Korean residents of Japan only on two conditions: (1) that Japan make compensation for previous forced labor—the funds to be used for resettlement of the returning Koreans; and (2) that those returning be allowed to take all of their property out of Japan. Seoul has still to win Tokyo's assent to these stipulations.



